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821 who walk by night': *allâh jeċfina šarr az-ẓalma w-az-ẓâlmin.*"

In winter time the moon passes across the center of the heavens, but in summer it stays on the edge, *ma' baṭin as-sema'*, while the sun burns right overhead.

805 The Bedouin divides all time into two periods: one when the moon reigns and the other when the sun reigns. The first is called the night, the second the day, *nahâr*, and together they form our day of twenty-four hours, *jourm*; this name, however, is not used by the Bedouin, who speaks only of the night or the nights; the day, the reign of the sun, is regarded as an appendage of the night, which begins with sunset and ends with sunrise. The period of sunset is called *moṛreb*; the first part of the night, *'aša'*; the time between sunset and dark, *'atîm*; then follows *al-'atîm al-aḫîr* (the second *'atîm*) and finally midnight, *nuṣṣ al-lejl*; the period between midnight and sunrise is *tâli-l-lejl*; then comes *šaḳḳat al-'amûd*, or the time when the morning star begins to rise above the dark horizon; and finally the dawn, *ṭa'at al-ḥamâr*. The period of sunrise is called *ṣubḥ*; when the sun has risen and dried the dew, or about halfway between sunrise and noon, *ẓaḥa'*. Noon is called *ẓuhr*; then follows *al-ḳâjile* or *ṣakkat al-'omaj*, the time of the siesta. About midway between noon and sunset is *'aṣr*, and then comes *'aṣejr*.

The division of the day into hours is not known. The word hour, *sâ'a*, they use, but in the sense of "right away," "in a minute." For instance: "Light the fire right away! *bsâ'a.*" The days of the week are not counted. *Sbû'*, a week, means not only seven, but also five or even nine or more days. Whether the month has twenty-eight or thirty days they do not know and do not care, as they count the nights alone.

For the individual months they have no special names. Ḥmâr, first slave of Prince an-Nûri, insisted that the successive months are named as follows: *'âšûr, ṣafar*, four months of *at-twâm, al-ṛarra, al-kṣejjer, ramaẓân*, two months of *al-afṭâr*, and finally *az-ẓaḥijje*, but none of the common Bedouins, not even one of the younger chiefs, knew all these names. *Ramaẓân* and *az-ẓaḥijje* were known to all; of the rest everybody could name some but without knowing the order.

The year itself begins with the autumn. When every stalk cracks, *jiṭeḳḳ al-'ûd*, and breaks — a sign of its being completely dry — then the Bedouin observes the clouds and waits for the rain and the new year which follows.

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on gravel and sand, and then waits a whole year. At the expiration of that time he scrapes away the sand and gravel, takes out the star, and brings it to a good swordsmith, who melts and beats it into a saber which can be sold for one hundred Turkish pounds ($450). 821

If there is lightning and thunder, but the clouds begin to scatter and disappear, the Rwala pray: "O, that he, who sends (angels) to the cloud, may send (an angel) to it on eight riding camels and say to it: 'The gift (of God) shall come down.' *Jâ min jirsel las-saḥâb jirsel leh ṭamân erčâb w-jaḳûl leh 'aṭwa' jiği.*" If merciful Allâh spreads out the clouds on high and but few drops fall, the Bedouins lament: "After this (rain) we have lost what might have brought us gold, (we have lost it) like a vibrating mirage. Truly, we can do nothing without Allâh. *Min 'oḳbeh raddeina-d-ḏahâb miṯl ẓaḥẓâḥ as-sarâb 'oḳb allâh mâ ḥenna šien.*" Abundant rain would have given the camels good pasture and for well-fed old camels gold can be had from the 'Aḳejl.

The end of the rain in the daytime is announced by the rainbow, *šejf al-maṭar*. As soon it appears, the clouds grow calm; *ilja sajjefat kajjefat*.

SEASONS AND RAINY PERIODS

In summer the clouds are plentiful, but they bring no rain. Only in the autumn there becomes visible either on the right or on the left of the sun a sun dog, *middat aš-šams*, a sure sign that rain will soon come. In this season the seer, *ṣâḥeb as-sirr*, of the Nṣejr clan, Mbârek eben Ḥwêmel, takes a large handful of salt and, dividing it into six small heaps indicating the principal rains, arranges them in the form of a cross, *ṣallab*, thus: 821 791 787

o *shejlâwi*
o *šitwi* o *ṭrûwi* o *ṣejfi*
o *ǧôzâwi*,

and then lies down by them and waits for what Allâh's messenger will tell him during the coming night. On the next morning he and the others examine the heaps. The one where the most salt is melted is the one which will produce the most abundant rain.

The year of the Bedouins begins with the first heavy rain following the appearance of the star Canopus, *sheil*, in 805 132

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805 the first days of October. "Canopus has shown himself; well,
132 then, let us go into the inner desert; *ṭala'at aš-shejl nuḥarreḥ*," is now the cry of the Bedouins, who, leaving the borders of the settled and cultivated districts, wander with all their possessions into the interior of the desert in search of pastures. Canopus reigns for forty nights, after which the Pleiades, *ṭrajja*, take the helm for twenty-five nights, *ṭrâwi*, to be followed by Gemini, *ǧawza'*, for an equal period. Thus the reign of Canopus, the Pleiades, and Gemini lasts ninety days in all — three months — and this season of the year is called *aṣ-ṣferi*, corresponding approximately to October, November, and December. Next, the star Sirius, *aš-ša'era*, rules for forty nights; this season of the year is called *aš-šta'*. For fifty nights after Sirius the ruler is Arcturus, *aṣ-ṣmâk*, but in the middle of our April the reign of the stars ends, as then the summer, *aṣ-ṣejf*, appears, which lasts to about the beginning of June and is succeeded by the dry season, *al-ḳêẓ*, extending over four months, to about the first days of October. The Bedouin knows, therefore, five seasons of the year: *aṣ-ṣferi*, ninety nights (from the beginning of October to the beginning of January); *aš-šta'* forty nights (to about February 20), followed by a period sometimes called the second part of *aš-šta'*, ending about March 4; *aṣ-ṣmâk*, fifty nights (to the middle of April); *aṣ-ṣejf*, to the beginning of June, and the four months of *al-ḳêẓ*. The common Bedouin is quite ignorant of any other division of the year.

821 The rains are divided by the Bedouin into *al-wasm*, *aš-*
132 *šitwi*, *aṣ-ṣmâk*, and *aṣ-ṣejfi*. The first includes the rains of *aṣ-shejlâwi*, *aṭ-ṭrâwi*, and *al-ǧôzâwi*, i. e. the rains of Canopus, the Pleiades, and Gemini, or the *aṣ-ṣferi* or autumnal rains.
[221] As soon as Canopus appears, the Bedouins leave their camps, pitched in the valleys and the broad dried-up river beds, which
[731] are often over two hundred kilometers long. After copious rains have fallen at the heads of these valleys, the water rushes wildly through the channels, washing away the camps and drowning both the people and their herds; hence the
[245] proverb: "When Canopus rises, trust not the creek and gather dates even at night; *ilja ṭala'at aṣ-shejl lâ tâmen aṣ-ṣejl waṭlammes aṭ-ṭamr bel-lejl*," because at that period the dates are ripe and no selecting is needed. The *shejlâwi* rain is also called
132 *al-ḫerfi* (or *al-ḫerfi*). If the ground is thoroughly soaked with
137 it, *arṣ maṣṣûma 'alejha-l-ḫerfi*, there soon appear on all sides

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In the inner desert

the word *rabî'* does not signify a season of the year; it is therefore impossible to translate it by the word spring, as we may when we are dealing with the settled and cultivated territories. The *fellâḥîn*, inhabitants of the cultivated territories, enjoy the *rabî'* from year to year, and, as it always begins at the same season, the *rabî'* for them signifies the spring. The angel Ǧibrîn, who rules over the rain clouds, likes neither the Rwala territory nor the desert; therefore he spreads his wings over them, so that it rains there only in narrow strips, i. e. where the rain slides off his wings. On the contrary, when he flies over the territory of the *fellâḥîn* he folds his wings as close together as possible, and then the rain falls everywhere. On his journey over the desert Ǧibrîn beats the clouds to make them fly the faster, but over the settled territory he leaves them in peace and it rains abundantly there. The teachers of the Koran in explanation of this conduct of Ǧibrîn say that he is angry with the Bedouins because they disregard the instructions which he imparted to the Prophet (Mohammed).

If the earth is not thoroughly soaked by any of the autumnal rains, then there is no *rabî'*; *al-arẓ alli mâ tinwasem mâ terabbe' muḥtije*. The abundance, *rabî'*, is also greater and of longer duration if the ground, after its soaking by the autumnal rain, is visited in addition by an abundant *smâk* rain. Then the whole steppe and even the desert are transformed into a delightful meadow. Every valley and piece of low ground or gentle slope, all the plains composed of fine red sand, as well as the rifts and heights are at once covered with an infinite variety of annuals and perennials. The camels nibble at the greatest dainties only and grow so fat that they can hardly move. The milk often flows or drips from the udders of the she-camels, which are full to overflowing; the mares and foals roll about in the thickest grass and the Bedouins, men, women, old people, and children, have more sweet or sour milk and camel's fat than they know what to do with. Moreover, they have the hope of a sure profit in selling the superfluous old or sterile she-camels to the 'Aḳejl buyers, who pay well for fat animals. In a territory where there is a *rabî'* tents can be seen scattered all around. With plenty of good pasture close to their tents the herdsmen do not drive their camels far out. Pure cold rain water can be found in every low-lying place, rock crevice, and hole in the river beds. Every one bathes, the clothes are washed, and parasites of all kinds

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831x 5. Her cheeks are as smooth as gossamer, which none must touch roughly
539x And which a light breeze lifts when unburdened with dew.
6. Her breasts thou wouldst liken to eggs, the halves of which lie on a sand drift,
While on her temples the hair waves like black [ostrich] plumes.
7. Her belly — neither fine cloth nor cotton
Nor even the Kashmir wool is as soft as her belly, not the smooth wool used for weaving rugs.
8. O little daughter of him who stands firm when the terror is at its height
And proves no coward when all rush about and bend over the necks of their horses.

The author of this poem was Čen'ân âl Ṭajjâr, a member of a once famous kin, the remains of which now usually camp in the neighborhood of Ḍmejr. Abu Rašîd was a friend of the love-stricken Čen'ân, whose sweetheart, a chief's daughter, was staying with her father in the inner desert.

Verse 1. *Malkûš* is one wounded or stricken; *lakešni hassejf* means "this saber wounded (struck) me." *Muntaha šakwâj* means "my last consolation, or comfort, is the man whom I trust the most." *Al-ḳalb muṛtall* or *al-ḳalb beh ṛoll* (or *hamm*) means the heart filled with unsatisfied, passionate love. 2. *Al-'afw* or *jâ-llâh 'awntak*, meaning "May Allâh have [782] pity on you!" or "May Allâh help you!" is a usual cry when one hears of a great misfortune. Allâh visits man with torments for his sins, hence the exclamation "*al-'afw*," meaning "Forgiveness!" "Mercy!" or "Pardon!" If Allâh forgives the mis- [805] deeds, the misfortune is past. *Šawwâl* is the tenth month. Čen'ân, who lived permanently with the settlers, uses this word, which is not usual in the desert. *Al-ḳṣajjer* is the name given by the Arabs living in the neighborhood of Damascus to the eighth month, *ša'bân*. The poet's sweetheart moved with her father to the inner desert in the month of *šawwâl*, and now *al-ḳṣajjer* was nearing its end; thus ten months were almost past and, still, neither messenger nor traveler, *ṭâreš*, had come bringing word of her. 3. *Baṭṭûš* is a plant with red fruits preserved for their pleasant odor. 5. *Dehdâr* is gossamer. 6. *Ḥača'* or *teḳel* means "resembles." A *ṭe'es* is a smooth drift of rosy sand. The halved shell of an ostrich egg lying on the smooth rosy sand reminds the poet of his sweetheart's charms.

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777 which to begin a task are Mondays and Thursdays. Their *waǧba* is not only favorable, *zêna*, but their countenance, too, is sweet, *ḥelw*, so that they insure good results. Wednesday, Saturday, and the forenoon of Friday are not suitable. There is no spirit which would assist a Bedouin who begins an undertaking on any of these days, and he would be left to his fate, *naṣîbeh*. The other days of the week are of no significance whatever.

[805] The Bedouin observes the moon very carefully, counting his days in accordance with its waxing or waning. For both of these also have their good or bad countenance, *waǧh*. The most suitable or lucky day is the first day of the month, if it falls on Monday or Thursday. Then the success of an undertaking is assured. Unlucky are such nights and days of the month as contain the numbers six or seven. The sixth, sixteenth, and twenty-sixth days of the month, called *al-farad*, are considered unlucky, as they break up or disintegrate any undertaking precisely as one can divide the figure six into two and two and two. The nights of the sixth, sixteenth and twenty-sixth of the month are called *lejâli-l-ṛarak*, the nights of flood, destruction. He who undertakes a work of importance on those days will drown his efforts in failure. Every being that comes into the world on any of these nights will surely perish and is on that account called *ṛarḳân*. A baby boy born on such a night will not learn to walk. *lâ jaskom*.

The seventh, seventeenth, and twenty-seventh days of the month are likewise unlucky. The number seven, *sab'*, is wholly under the domination of the spirits; anyone pronouncing it irritates the evil spirits and repels the good. Colloquially *samḥ* is used instead of *sab'*, which is employed only in conjuring or swearing, and also in cursing to perdition — that is, when calling on the spirits with some object in view.

The ninth, nineteenth, and twenty-ninth days remind one of the waning of the month. *nefâż aš-šahr*; for this reason it is better not to begin anything important on these days. A raid made on any of them will certainly fail, especially if led by several chiefs. On no other days of the month are there so many disputes and quarrels as on the ninth, nineteenth, and twenty-ninth — it seems as if every human being was then unconsciously subject to irritation, *mat'ûs*.

The twenty-first day brings much evil into the world. The traveler loses his way most easily on that day. A child born on the twenty-first is called *maḳrûd*, pursued by trouble;

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3. I for myself twisted a rope to pull this world with, 539x
But, instead, the world pulled me without a rope. 577x
4. O thou who sittest in the shade! it is as if thy shade were gone,
And over thee who sittest in the sun has fallen a shade.
5. He that says "I am better than others" is destined for torments,
And he that says "I am violence" will be violated by men.
6. Become not a long spear, even if thou reachest its length,
But be not downcast, even if the present has treated thee mercilessly.
7. A well cannot be filled with dew or moist fog,
And a revolt will not be calmed without an effort.
8. The informer shall not whisper in a noble man's ear,
And true men shall not eat lies.
9. How many are there who rest on the goods of their father and grandfather,
But, if the Lord of this world shall destroy those goods, they will perish.

The poet was Kumejzân at-Tamîmi of the Beni Tamîm tribe, who live in various settlements of Neǧd; the reciters, Prince an-Nûri, Ḥmâr abu 'Awwâd, and Ǧwâd al-'Âni.

Verse 1. *Jowm* signifies a day from sunset to sunset, hence the night too. The days are secret, because nobody knows how many people were begotten in them, *ad-dinja telkah w-teled*. 2. Grief caused by various troubles does not torment so much in the daytime as at night, when the troubled man cannot sleep. *Čwaneh* means that the nights lay on the red-hot iron used in curing various diseases. *'Âtihen* means putting oneself above or being offensive to others. 3. Sooner will the surroundings spoil a man than a man reform his surroundings. 4. A despised person ought to be conscious of his condition and should not press into the foreground, while he who is famous ought not to forget that the time may come when his fame will end. 6. *Marhâš* is the term applied to an unusually long spear. No matter how many good qualities a man may have, he should not put himself above others and wound them with his sarcasms. *Heǧ'en* is one low in spirit, downcast, crushed. 7. *Ǧibb* is a deep well. *Neda'* means the dripping moisture which settles on clothing, tents, animals,